

## **Grand Circus Park Historic District**

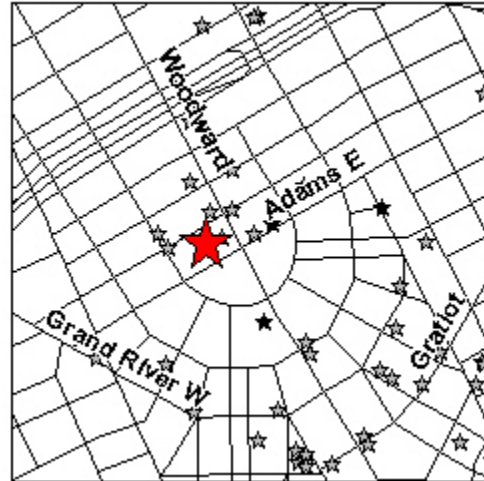
General Boundaries: Elizabeth, Clifford, John R, and Adams Street.

Local

State

State Marker

National           √           2/28/83



**Grand Circus Park**

Photo courtesy of City of Detroit

### **Historic overview:**

The Grand Circus Park Historic District is significant as a collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings by noted architects including: Albert Kahn, Daniel Burnham, George W. Post, C. Howard Crane, Hinchman and Grylls, and Gordon W. Lloyd. The buildings include substantial commercial, luxury hotel and ornate theater buildings possessing a grand scale and sophisticated character. The district is also significant in urban planning as including the major nucleus of Judge Woodward's 1807 street plan. The plan was based on a hexagon, divided into twelve sections, which could be repeated. It called for principal parkways 200 feet wide and secondary diagonals 120 feet wide intersecting at circles or circuses. Woodward intended Grand Circus Park to be the heart of the city. As a result of landowner opposition, who preferred the grid system of land subdivision, Grand Circus Park was never constructed as the full circle indicated in the Woodward plan. The streets to the north were laid out as a regular grid at right angles to Woodward Avenue.

During the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the area underwent a steady change from its earlier low-density residential use to higher density commercial use. Most of the buildings in this district were constructed during Detroit's boom period between 1915 and 1928. With the introduction of elegant theaters into the area during that period, the neighborhood evolved into an entertainment district. During the 1920s, Grand Circus Park superseded Monroe Street as the center of Detroit's theatrical activity, and by 1928 was ringed by eight theaters. The park itself has long been considered the limits of Detroit's central business district and still defines the northern commercial boundary.

